



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & WELFARE

DIRK KEMPTHORNE – Governor
KARL B. KURTZ – Director

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
450 West State Street, 10th Floor
P.O. Box 83720
Boise, ID 83720-0036
PHONE 208-334-5625
FAX 208-334-0668

News Release

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Tom Shanahan
(208) 334-0668

Idaho Fish Consumption Advisory Issued For Lake Pend Oreille

People should limit their consumption of Lake Trout and Lake Whitefish from Lake Pend Oreille because of possible health risks from mercury. The Idaho Fish Consumption Advisory Program has completed an assessment of the north Idaho lake and developed fish consumption guidelines that include:

- Pregnant and breastfeeding women, along with women planning to become pregnant, should limit the fish they eat to no more than two, eight-ounce servings per month of Lake Trout or four, eight-ounce servings per month of Lake Whitefish;
- Children under the age of seven should limit the fish they eat to no more than one, four-ounce serving per month of Lake Trout or two, four-ounce servings per month of Lake Whitefish; and
- The general public should eat no more than three, eight-ounce servings per month of Lake Trout or four, eight-ounce servings per month of Lake Whitefish.

Mercury concentrations found in Lake Pend Oreille Lake Trout are similar to mercury concentrations found in canned white, or albacore, tuna. Mercury concentrations in Lake Whitefish are lower than Lake Trout, but similar to concentrations found in canned light tuna. People who consume store-bought tuna or other fish in addition to fish from Lake Pend Oreille, should consider this additional source of mercury when determining the amount of fish to eat.

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Fish are an important part of a healthy diet and contain high quality protein, essential nutrients and are low in saturated fats. Due to the nutritional benefits of eating fish, women and children are encouraged to eat a well-balanced diet that includes a variety of fish. However, it is important to follow the advisory and limit the amount of fish consumed.

Almost all fish and shellfish contain trace amounts of mercury. In sufficient amounts, mercury has been shown to cause central nervous system problems, especially in young children whose developing bodies easily absorb mercury.

Mercury collects in the meat of fish and cannot be removed by any special cooking techniques. Since younger, smaller fish tend to contain less mercury, it is advised to consume smaller fish. Because contaminants other than mercury, such as pesticides and PCBs, are found at higher levels in the fatty tissue of fish, it is advised to trim away the dark, fatty tissue, remove the skin, and cook the fish on a rack so fat drips off (don't use the drippings for sauces or gravies).

The Idaho Fish Consumption Advisory Program addresses contamination in water bodies statewide that may impact fish and human health. For more information, contact the Idaho Fish Consumption Advisory Program toll-free at 1-866-240-3553, or visit www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov

	Pregnant or Breastfeeding Women, Women Planning to be Pregnant	Children Under 7 Years of Age	General Public
Lake Pend Oreille	Limit fish consumption to no more than 2 meals per month of Lake Trout and or 4 meals per month of Lake Whitefish	Limit fish consumption to no more than 1 meal per month of Lake Trout or 2 meals per month of Lake Whitefish.	Limit fish consumption to no more than 3 meals per month of Lake Trout or 4 meals per month of Lake Whitefish.

(Editors: For more information, please contact Chris Corwin, Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, at 208-334-5508)